

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Robin Hood and the Golden Arrow

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WHEN as the sheriff of Nottingham
Was come, with mickle grief,
He talkd no good of Robin Hood,
That strong and sturdy thief.
Fal lal dal de

So unto London-road he past,
His losses to unfold
To King Richard, who did regard
The tale that he had told.

`Why,' quoth the king, 'what shall I do?
Art thou not sheriff for me?
The law is in force, go take thy course
Of them that injure thee.

`Go get thee gone, and by thyself
Devise some tricking game
For to enthrall yon rebels all;
Go take thy course with them.'

So away the sheriff he returnd,
And by the way he thought
Of the words of the king, and how the thing
To pass might well be brought.

For within his mind he imagined
That when such matches were,
Those outlaws stout, without all doubt,
Would be the bowmen there.

So an arrow with a golden head
And shaft of silver white,
Who won the day should bear away
For his own proper right.

Tidings came to brave Robin Hood,
Under the green-wood tree
`Come prepare you then, my merry men,
We'll go yon sport to see.'

With that stept forth a brave young man,

David of Doncaster

`Master,' said he, 'Be rul'd by me,
From the green-wood we'll not stir.

`To tell the truth, I'm well informed
Yon match is a wile;
The sheriff, I wiss, devises this
Us archers to beguile.'

`O thou smells of a coward,' said Robin Hood,
`Thy words does not please me;
Come on't what will, I'll try my skill
At yon brave archery.'

O then bespoke brave Little John
Come, let us thither gang;
Come listen to me, how it shall be
That we need not be kend.

Our mantles, all of Lincoln green,
Behind us we will leave;
We'll dress us all so several
They shall not us perceive.

One shall wear white, another red,
One yellow, another blue;
Thus in disguise, to the exercise
We'll gang, whateer ensue.

Forth from the green-wood they are gone,
With hearts all firm and stout,
Resolving then with the sheriff's men
To have a hearty bout.

So themselves they mixed with the rest,
To prevent all suspicion;
For if they should together hold
They thought it no discretion.

So the sheriff looking round about,
Amongst eight hundred men,
But could not see the sight that he
Had long expected then.

Some said, If Robin Hood was here,
And all his men to boot,
Sure none of them could pass these men,
So bravely they do shoot.

`Ay,' quoth the sheriff, and scratchd his head,
`I thought he would have been here;
I thought he would, but, tho he's bold,
He durst not now appear.'

O that word grieved Robin Hood to the heart;
He vexed in his blood;
Eer long, thought he, thou shalt well see
That here was Robin Hood.

Some cried, Blue jacket! another cried, Brown!
And the third cried, Brave Yellow!
But the fourth man said, Yon man in red
In this place has no fellow.

For that was Robin Hood himself,
For he was cloathd in red;
At every shot the prize he got,
For he was both sure and dead.

So the arrow with the golden head
And shaft of silver white
Brave Robin Hood won, and bore with him
For his own proper right.

These outlaws there, that very day,
To shun all kind of doubt,
By three or four, no less no more,
As they went in came out.

Until they all assembled were
Under the green-wood shade,
Where they report, in pleasant sport,
What brave pastime they made.

Says Robin Hood, All my care is,
How that yon sheriff may
Know certainly that it was I
That bore his arrow away.

Says Little John, My counsel good
Did take effect before,
So therefore now, if you'll allow,
I will advise once more.

`Speak on, speak on,' said Robin Hood,
`Thy wit's both quick and sound;
I know no man amongst us can
For wit like thee be found.'

`This I advise,' said Little John;
`That a letter shall be pend,
And when it is done, to Nottingham
You to the sheriff shall send.'

`That is well advised,' said Robin Hood,
`But how must it be sent?'
`Pugh! when you please, it's done with ease,
Master, be you content.

`I'll stick it on my arrow's head,
And shoot it into the town;
The mark shall show where it must go,
When ever it lights down.'

The project it was full performd;
The sheriff that letter had;
Which when he read, he scratchd his head,
And rav'd like one that's mad.

So we'll leave him chafing in his grease,
Which will do him no good;
Now, my friends, attend, and hear the end
Of honest Robin Hood.

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